

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8127

INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 00691

EXDIS

DEPT PASS: SECDEF, CNO, CINCLANT, CINCUSNAVEUR,

COMICEDEFOR FOR INFO

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, MARR, NATO, IC, UK

SUBJECT: CALLAGHAN ON ICELAND/UK FISHERIES DISPUTE

REF: LONDON 423

1. SUMMARY. CLEARLY ANXIOUS TO END DISPUTE BEFORE SITUATION DETERIORATES FURTHER, CALLAGHAN IS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW ALL BRITISH VESSELS FROM ICELANDIC WATERS FOR ONE WEEK IN RETURN FOR ICELANDIC AGREEMENT TO COMPROMISE SOLUTION ON CATCH SIZE. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR, PAID FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN YESTERDAY (JANUARY 14), DURING COURSE OF WHICH CALLAGHAN DISCUSSED ICELAND. HE BEGAN BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HMG HAD SET ITS OPENING NEGOTIATING FIGURE OF 130,000 TONS TOO HIGH. IT QUICKLY CAME DOWN TO 110,000 AND, HE SAID, WAS PREPARED
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TO COME DOWN A GOOD BIT FURTHER. ICELANDERS, HOWEVER,

HAD STARTED AT 65,000 TONS, THEN WITHDRAWN THIS OFFER, AND NOW ARE NOT PREPARED TO DO MORE THAN REINSTITUTE IT. CALLAGHAN CITED BALANCE OF PAYMENT FIGURES AND EMPLOYMENT FIGURES IN SUPPORT OF HIS CONTENTION THAT BRITAIN SIMPLY COULD NOT AFFORD TO SETTLE FOR A FIGURE THAT LOW.

3. CALLAGHAN STRESSED THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS STOCK CONSERVATION, TO NEGOTIATE, TO BE FLEXIBLE. WHAT HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT OREPARED TO DO, HE ASSERTED, WAS ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT BECAUSE ICELAND WAS ESSENTIAL TO NATO, BRITAIN HAD TO CONCEDE ICELAND'S FULL DEMAND. HE QUOTED THE SECRETARY QUOTING BISMARCK TO THE EFFECT THAT: "THE WEAK ARE STRONG BECAUSE THEY ARE RECKLESS; THE STRONG ARE WEAK BECAUSE THEY HAVE SCRUPLES."

4. IN CONCLUSION CALLAQHAN SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO WITHDRAW ALL BRITISH VESSELS (FISHING TRAWLERS AND NAVAL UNITS) FROM IAEANDIC WATERS FOR ONE WEEK IF ICELANDERS WOULD AGREE TO REASONABLE COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

5. COMMENT. CALLAGHAN CLEARLY WANTS TO SEE THIS ISSUE SETTLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON SOME TERMS OTHER THAN COMPLETE CAPITULATION TO INFLEXIBLE ICELANDIC DEMANDS. HIS OFFER TO UITHDRAW ALL BRITISH SHIPS APPEARS INTENDED TO OFFER ICELANDERS FACE-SAVING DEVICE FOR RETURNING TO NEGOTIATING TABLE AND REACHING COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

RICHARDSON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF, CNO, CINCLANT, CINCUSNAVEUR, COMICEDEFOR.

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